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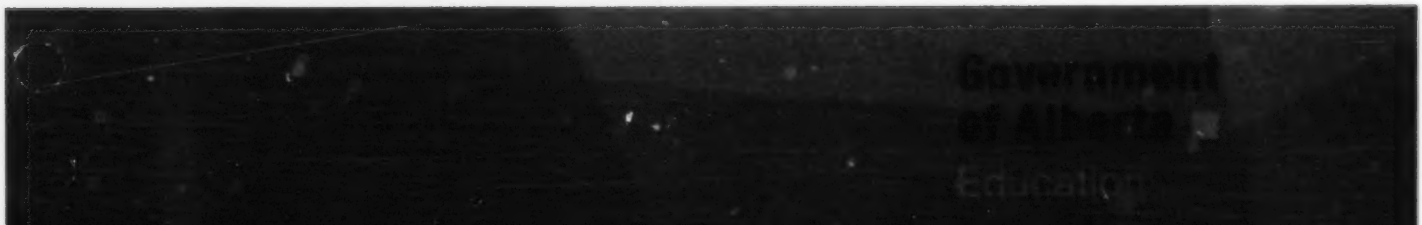
Policy and Requirements for Charter School Planning and Results Reporting

March 2010



Policy and Requirements for Charter School Planning and Results Reporting, March 2010[©]

This document contains requirements for Alberta's charter schools. Text shaded in blue indicates substantive changes from the prior year.

This document is online at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/planning.aspx and provides the requirements for:

- Charter school three-year education plans for 2010/2011–2012/2013. Charter school plans must be approved by the board and posted on the charter school website by November 30, 2010.
- Charter school Annual Education Results Reports on the 2009/2010 school year based on the three-year education plans for 2009/2010–2011/2012. Charter school reports must be posted on the charter school website by November 30, 2010.

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Policy and Requirements for Charter School Planning and Results Reporting, 2010 edition

Requirements for:

- Charter school three-year education plans, 2010/2011 to 2012/2013
- Charter school annual education results reports on the 2009/2010 school year

This document is issued under authority of the following:

- *School Act*, RSA 2000, Section 78
- *School Act*, RSA 2000, Section 36(1)
- *Alberta Regulation* 113/2007, School Act, School Councils Regulation
- *Alberta Regulation* 120/2008, Government Organization Act, Education Grants Regulation, Section 7

[original signed by Keray Henke]
Deputy Minister of Education

March 10, 2010
Date

Policy and Requirements for Charter School Planning and Results Reporting

Requirements for charter schools in Alberta

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What's changed?

Page

Key changes are shaded in blue throughout the document. Highlights of changes are listed below.

- The document has been streamlined by removing promising practices information on planning and reporting and by removing explanatory information on the Accountability Pillar. This information is available separately on the ministry website:
  - School Authority Planning and Reporting Reference Guide
  - The Accountability Pillar of the Renewed Funding Framework Fact Sheet

A number of changes have been made in response to feedback from stakeholders and as part of the Ministry's continuing efforts to reduce duplication and administrative burden on school authorities:

- The charter school three-year education plan (3YEP) and annual education results report (AERR) are due on the same date, November 30 each year. Charter schools may combine their 3YEP and AERR into a single document or continue to prepare separate documents, whichever they prefer. 2-5; 3-3
- To support these options, a pre-populated template that combines the 3YEP and AERR requirements will be provided with the Accountability Pillar reports in October 2010 as well as a template for a stand-alone AERR. A separate pre-populated template for the 3YEP will be provided with the Accountability Pillar reports in May 2010. 2-5
- Since school authorities are no longer required to post a separate average class size report, they have the choice of continuing to post the report and including a link to it in their AERR or adding the class size report to their AERR in an appendix. The average class size report must include average class size information for the 2009/2010 school year. 3-4
- The following 3YEP and AERR requirements have been discontinued:

  For three-year education plans:
  - Separate Action Plans for Accountability Pillar measures with two or more years of "Concern" evaluations—not required. These results must continue to be addressed within the three-year education plan.
  - Principles used in preparing the charter school budget—not required
  - Explanation of how the charter board communicates the plan to parents and public—not required.

  For AERRs:
  - Accomplishments—optional, not required
  - Five years of provincial results—optional, not required
  - Comment on results—optional, not required

Page

- Future challenges—optional, not required
- Explanation of how the report is communicated to parents and the public—not required

Specific changes:

- Charter schools must have an updated three-year plan in place before the start of the school year. The plans must be finalized after the new year of provincial achievement test and diploma examination results are available in the fall and must be approved by the board and posted by November 30. — 2-5
- Budget information contained in the plan must be consistent with the charter school authority's Fall Budget Update. — 2-4
- The dates the 3YEP and AERR were approved by the board were added to the Accountability Statements and the text of the Accountability Statement in the 3YEP was revised to reflect the board's commitment that strategies will be implemented to improve student learning and results. The Accountability Statements are in Appendix C and include a version to use in a combined 3YEP/AERR. — Appendix C
- Clarification that the colour Accountability Pillar Summaries must be placed near the beginning of the three-year education plan and the annual education results report, not mid-way through the report or in an appendix. — 2-1; 3-1
- The focus of the financial summary has shifted from providing technical information on annual and accumulated operating surplus/deficit to providing general information on spending — how the board spent its funds, whether spending was within budget, how deficit (if any) will be addressed, sources and uses of school-generated funds. — 3-2

Background

Structure and Purpose of Alberta's K – 12 Education System

The basic education of Alberta's children is the responsibility of the provincial government and is governed by the *School Act*. Per provisions of the *School Act*, education is delivered by a system of schools operated by school boards and francophone, charter school and accredited private school authorities for the benefit of students. The highest priority of the K – 12 education system is the success of every child in school. Each type of school authority assures the quality of education for its students and the Ministry of Education assures the quality of education provided by school authorities. The Ministry uses school authority Accountability Pillar information to assess and provide assurance to the public and the Legislative Assembly on the quality of education in Alberta's school system.

Accountability and Transparency in Alberta's K – 12 Education System

Accountability arises from a delegation of responsibility from one party to another, in the case of Alberta's K – 12 education, from the provincial government to school authorities. Some discretion in how these delegated responsibilities are exercised is associated with the delegation to an accountable organization. This delegation of responsibilities also comes with an obligation to answer for and publicly report on the discharge of responsibilities, spending of public funds and results achieved by the accountable organization. This facilitates the transparency of the accountable organization. Consequences are applied to accountable organizations based on performance.

In Alberta's K – 12 education system, school authorities (school boards, francophone education authorities, charter school authorities and accredited private school authorities) are considered accountable organizations. The Ministry of Education allocates funds to school

authorities to fulfill their delegated responsibilities to provide education programs for Alberta's
K – 12 students, which creates an accountability relationship between the Ministry and school authorities. This accountability relationship is established in legislation and regulation, as summarized below.

Note: This document applies to charter school authorities. Separate planning and reporting documents are available for school boards and for accredited-funded private schools on the Ministry of Education's website.

Legislative Authority

Section 78 of the *School Act* requires accountable organizations to develop a reporting and accountability system on any matter the Minister prescribes, to use accountability information and to report it to students, parents and electors in the manner the Minister prescribes. Section 7 of the Education Grants Regulation under the *Government Organization Act* requires recipients of grants from the Ministry of Education to provide the Minister, upon request, any information the Minister considers necessary for the purpose of determining whether or not the recipient has complied or is complying with the conditions of the grant. Section 13 of the *School Councils Regulation* under the *School Act* requires charter schools to provide their school council with the opportunity to be involved in the development of the charter school's three-year education plan and annual results report, and requires charter schools to provide their results and reasonable interpretation of provincial tests and other provincial measures to the school council. Section 36(1) of the *School Act*, Section 22 on School Councils and Section 78 apply to charter schools. The full text of these sections of legislation and regulations is provided in Appendix A.

Pursuant to the *Government Organization Act* and the *School Act*, and to operationalize the accountability relationships and processes established in provincial legislation, *Policy and Requirements for Charter School Education Planning and Results Reporting* contains the Minister's requirements for charter school three-year education plans and annual education results reports. It also contains the updated school authority accountability policy.

The Minister's requirements in *Policy and Requirements for Charter School Education Planning and Results Reporting* ensure alignment between charter school education plans and annual education results reports and the Ministry of Education's vision, mission, goals, outcomes and performance measures for the basic education system. In this way, these Ministry charter school documents help ensure that the K – 12 education system is focused effectively and efficiently on meeting the

educational needs of Alberta students. At the same time, charter school plans incorporate local strategies and may incorporate local goals, priorities, outcomes and measures that reflect the unique characteristics and circumstances of their communities. Similarly, charter school results reports include information on local activities and results on provincial and local measures. As such, charter school education plans and annual education results reports reflect local needs and priorities within the context of provincial direction and framework.

In addition, charter schools have a unique purpose in Alberta's public education system to provide different and innovative approaches for improving student learning, not only for the benefit of their own students, but also for use in other schools for the benefit of students throughout Alberta's public education system.

School Authority Accountability Policy

School authorities are accountable for results achieved from carrying out their responsibilities to provide education programs to Alberta students. As accountable organizations, school authorities are required to:

- establish a system of accountability for results that encompasses their schools
- interpret and report results to parents, students, the Ministry of Education and the public in a manner and at a time the Minister prescribes as part of ensuring transparency
- use results to improve the quality and effectiveness of education programs provided to their students and to improve student learning and achievement.

Accountability Framework for the K – 12 Education System

The Accountability Framework for the K – 12 education system is a formal structure established by the Ministry to support accountability and transparency throughout the system and to ensure alignment of school authorities and schools with provincial direction. This helps ensure the highest priority of the education system is the success of the student. The Accountability Framework consists of:

- three-year education plans (3YEPs), which contain
  - measureable goals and outcomes

  - performance measures to provide information on achievement of outcomes
  - targets to improve low or declining performance levels
  - strategies to achieve outcomes and improve results

- implementation of strategies and programs, adjusting if necessary
- annual education results reports (AERRs) that publicly report results, assess achievement and indicate whether improvement has taken place
- answering to the Ministry for performance results over time.

Reviewing Charter School Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports

Alberta Education staff review charter school three-year education plans and AERRs to:

- enhance the department's understanding of the charter school's authority's local context and priorities
- encourage charter school improvement efforts
- ensure consistency between the plan and the report
- monitor compliance with provincial requirements
- identify implications for provincial planning.

Ministry staff discuss their reviews of three-year education plans and AERRs with charter school staff.

Section

2

Three-Year Education Plans for Charter Schools, 2010-2013

Components and Requirements of Charter School Education Plans

Required

Charter school education plans must maintain a three-year time frame. Charter schools are required to consider their latest Accountability Pillar results when they review, adjust and roll the three-year education plan forward each year.

Components of three-year education plans are in bold below and defined in Appendix B. An optional format, pre-populated with the required Accountability Pillar performance measures, will be provided to charter schools with the May 2010 Accountability Pillar reports to use in updating their three-year plans.

Optional

- ❒ **Message from board chair**

Required

- ❒ An **accountability statement**, signed by the board chair (see Appendix C for the wording to the Accountability Statements for three-year education plans, AERRs and the Accountability Statement to be used if the charter school combines their 3YEP and AERR into one document).

Required

- ❒ **Accountability Pillar Summary** in colour, as provided by Alberta Education on the Extranet (include the May 2010 summary in the draft plan and the October 2010 summary in the final plan). The Accountability Pillar summary must be near the beginning of the three-year education plan. Note that the FNMI Accountability summary and results for FNMI measures are not required to be included in the 3YEP.

Optional

- ❒ **Foundation Statements** — vision, mission, principles and beliefs.

Optional

- ❒ **A Profile of the Charter School**

Optional

- ❒ **Trends and issues**

Required

❒ **Provincial goals, related outcomes, performance measures, targets and strategies.** For each outcome, include:

- the measures used to assess progress and achievement of the outcome (see list of outcomes and measures on pages 2-3 and 2-4).
- results and evaluations for the measures or reference to the overall summary page (results and evaluations for FNMI measures are not required).
- targets for each year of the plan for measures with an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern."

  These targets must reflect reasonable progress toward or moving into the next higher achievement level, as defined by the evaluation methodology, over the plan period. For example, if the charter school result is more than 10 percentage points below the next higher achievement level, it may not be possible to move into that higher level in three years, but it would be possible to achieve results that are closer to the next level. Refer to the Achievement Evaluation Table included in the Accountability Pillar Overall Summary report on the Extranet for the range of results that are included in each achievement level.

  Notes

  - As gains are made toward or into the next achievement level, the improvement evaluation will reflect this progress with an evaluation of "Maintained" or higher.
  - While useful, especially for Accountability Pillar measures, targets are not required except for the Accountability Pillar measures with an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern."

Optional

Charter schools may include additional results or contextual information to help explain strategies and targets to parents and the public, such as:

- achievement test or diploma exam results for specific grades and subjects
- participation rates in achievement tests for specific populations of students
- Accountability Pillar survey results for a particular respondent group
- GLA information
- results from the school's own surveys.

Required Goals, Outcomes, Performance Measures and Targets

Listed below are the required goals, outcomes and performance measures for charter school three-year education plans. Targets for each year of the plan are required for all Accountability Pillar measures with an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern."

Charter Goals, Outcomes and Performance Measures

- Locally determined, consistent with Section 35 of the *School Act*, per the charter school's purpose/mandate.

GOAL ONE: High Quality Learning Opportunities

OUTCOME: **School environments are safe and caring.**

- Overall teacher, parent and student agreement that students are safe at school, learning the importance of caring for others, learning respect for others and are treated fairly at school.

OUTCOME: **The education system meets the needs of all K–12 students and supports our society and the economy.**

- Overall teacher, parent and student satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.
- Overall teacher, parent and student satisfaction with the overall quality of basic education.

OUTCOME: **Children and youth with at risk factors have their needs addressed through timely and effective programs and supports.**

- Annual dropout rate of students aged 14 to 18 *(junior and senior high school programs)*.

OUTCOME: **High school completion rates are showing continual improvement.**

- High school completion rate of students within three years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.

GOAL TWO: Excellence in Student Learning Outcomes

OUTCOME: **Students demonstrate high standards in learner outcomes.**

- Overall percentage of students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who achieved the acceptable standard, and the percentage who achieved the standard of excellence on Provincial Achievement Tests *(overall cohort results) (K-9 programs)*.
- Overall percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard, and overall percentage of students who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma examinations *(overall results) (high school programs)*.
- Percentage of students writing four or more diploma exams within three years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.
- Percentage of Grade 12 students eligible for a Rutherford Scholarship *(high school programs)*.

OUTCOME: **Students are well prepared for lifelong learning.**

- High school to post-secondary transition rate of students within six years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.
- Overall teacher and parent satisfaction that high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills for lifelong learning (required for K-9 charter schools and optional for high school programs).

OUTCOME: **Students are well prepared for employment.**

- Overall teacher and parent agreement that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school.

OUTCOME: **Students model the characteristics of active citizenship.**

- Overall teacher, parent and student agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.

GOAL THREE: Success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Students

OUTCOME: **Key learning outcomes for FNMI students improve.**

- Annual dropout rate of self-identified FNMI students aged 14-18 *((junior and senior high school programs)*.
- High school completion rate of self-identified FNMI students within three years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.
- Overall percentage of self-identified FNMI students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who achieved the acceptable standard and overall percentage who achieved the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests *(overall cohort results) (K-9 programs)*.
- Overall percentage of self-identified FNMI students who achieved the acceptable standard and overall percentage who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma examinations *(overall results) (high school programs)*.
- Percentage of self-identified FNMI students writing four or more diploma examinations within three years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.
- Percentage of self-identified Grade 12 FNMI students eligible for a Rutherford Scholarship *(high school programs)*.
- High school to post-secondary transition rate of self-identified FNMI students within six years of entering Grade 10 *(high school programs)*.

GOAL FOUR: Highly Responsive and Responsible Jurisdiction

OUTCOME: **The jurisdiction demonstrates effective working relationships.**

- Overall teacher and parent satisfaction with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education.

OUTCOME: **The jurisdiction demonstrates leadership, innovation and continuous improvement.**

- Overall percentage of teachers, parents and students indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three years.

Notes

- The results for the required measures are available in the Accountability Pillar reports on Alberta Education's Extranet.
- Accountability Pillar reports are provided to schools in May for their information and use in developing strategies to address results.
- The Accountability Pillar reports include FNMI results. These results are provided for schools to use in developing strategies for their three-year education plans and in working with staff, FNMI students, parents and communities. Introduction of required school-level FNMI reporting will be determined following further consultation with stakeholders.
- The evaluation methodology for school Accountability Pillar measures will be improved in October 2010 to include an evaluation for each PAT grade and each survey respondent group, resulting in more meaningful school-level evaluations. (Currently the evaluation of provincial achievement test results is based on the combined results for Grades 3, 6 and 9 and the evaluation of survey measures is based on the combined results of all respondent groups.)
- Consistent with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, when the number of students or survey participants in a group is less than six, results are not reported to protect individual privacy.
- A brief definition of each performance measure is available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/planning.aspx in the Accountability Pillar Fact Sheet.

Required

For each outcome, charter schools must develop and include **strategies** (at least one strategy for each outcome) in the plan to address Accountability Pillar results. In addition:

- **Charter schools with an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern" based on the evaluation of Accountability Pillar results are required to clearly identify their strategies for improving results for those measures**
- Specifically for Goal 3, charter schools with no or very few self-identified FNMI students must refer to strategies in other goals related to infusing Aboriginal perspectives, meeting the diverse needs of students or involving their parents.

Required

❒ **Budget Summary.** This section presents summary information about the board's budget for the first year of the three-year plan. The budget summary **must** include:

- charts/tables that summarize budget information consistent with the charter school authority's Fall Budget Update
- a web link to the charter school's budget for 2010/2011.
- key financial information about the upcoming school year, focusing on anticipated major changes or shifts in focus, such as addressing Accountability Pillar results.

This section may refer to budgeted changes in enrolment, certificated and non-certificated staff, programs, funding, revenues and expenses, annual surpluses or deficits and accumulated surpluses.

Required

❒ **Summary of Facility and Capital Plans**. This section provides a brief description of major school renewal or construction projects underway or planned over the next three years (if applicable) and their benefit to students *(which students, programs)*.

The projects presented in this section **must** reflect the priorities in the charter school's capital plan.

Include a web link to more detailed information on the charter school's facility and capital plans.

❒ **Parental Involvement.** Indicate what the board has done to meet its obligations under Section 13 of the School Councils Regulation (Alberta Regulation 113/2007) to provide opportunity for school councils to be involved in updating school plans.

Required

❒ **Deadlines and Communication.** Charter schools must review and update or reaffirm their three-year education plans for 2010/2011 to 2012/2013 and have a draft plan in place before the start of the 2010/2011 school year.

Charter schools must finalize their three-year education plans in the fall, considering the provincial achievement test and diploma exam results and evaluations provided in early October 2010 and the school's Fall Budget Update.

Charter school three-year education plans must be approved by its board and posted on its website by November 30 each year.

Include a web link to the charter school's three-year education plan in the posted document (and in the print version if available). Notify the Zone Director of the posting and include the web link in the email notice.

Note

Charter schools may combine their three-year education plan and AERR into one document if they wish or they may continue to prepare and post two separate documents. A pre-populated template will be provided with the Accountability Pillar reports in October 2010 that consolidates the plan and the report into one document. A pre-populated template for a separate plan document will be provided in May 2010 and a separate pre-populated template for the AERR will be provided in October 2010.

Charter schools have an obligation to share their effective practices and innovative approaches for the benefit of Alberta's education system as a whole. To support this, charter school education plans must include a Communication Plan that outlines how the school will carry out this obligation. The elements of a good communication plan include:

- objectives
- audiences
- key messages
- an action plan (specific communication strategies (with timelines).

Section

3

Annual Education Results Reports, 2009/2010

Components and Requirements for the Charter School AERR

The November 2010 Annual Education Results Report reports on the charter school's three-year education plan for 2009–2012 and includes the components listed below in bold. An optional template for the AERR, pre-populated with the required Accountability Pillar information, will be provided to charter schools as part of the October 2010 Accountability Pillar reports.

Optional

- ❒ A **message** from the board chair.

Required

- ❒ An **accountability statement** signed by the board chair (see Appendix C for the wording to the Accountability Statements for three-year education plans, AERRs and the Accountability Statement to be used if the charter school combines their 3YEP and AERR into one document).

Required

- ❒ The **Accountability Pillar Overall Summary** report in colour provided by Alberta Education in October 2010. The summary must be placed near the beginning of the document, not mid-way through or in an appendix. Note that the FNMI Accountability Pillar summary and results for FNMI measures are not required to be reported.

Optional

- ❒ **Summary of Accomplishments**.
  - the charter school's **accomplishments** (impact of major activities/ strategies).

Required

- ❒ Report the charter school's **performance measure results** for 2009/2010 in relation to the goals, outcomes and targets for 2009/2010 set in the charter school's education plan (see pages 2-3 and 2-4 for 2009–2012 list of required measures). Specifically, for each required measure, report:

- five years of charter school results or available results if less than five years; (reporting five years of comparative provincial results is optional)
- most recent result in relation to the target for 2009/2010 (if applicable).

Notes

- Reporting FNMI results is not required.
- Reporting provincial results is not required but may be useful in interpreting charter school results.
- The following are not required to be reported but may be useful to include to help interpret results:
  - achievement test results for writers
  - GLA information.
- Consistent with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, when the number of students or survey participants in a group is less than six, data must not be reported to protect individual privacy.
- Starting October 2010, the Accountability Pillar report provided to charter schools will use an improved evaluation methodology to evaluate provincial achievement tests and survey measures. There will be a unique evaluation of test results for each grade and for each survey respondent group, resulting in more meaningful school-level evaluations. (Currently the evaluation of provincial achievement test results is based on the combined results for Grades 3, 6 and 9 and the evaluation of survey measures is based on the combined results of all respondent groups.)

Optional

Commentary on results, such as contextual information, factors affecting performance including, actions taken by the charter school that may have contributed to evaluations of "Improved" or "Improved significantly" on Accountability Pillar measures, may be included.

Optional

❒ **Future challenges**, such as changes in enrolment patterns, areas for improvement and how the charter school will address these.

Required

❒ **Summary of Financial Results.** The financial summary

- provides key financial information about the school year, including information on how the board spent its money, sources and uses of school generated funds, significant changes over the prior year (if any) and whether spending was within budget (if not why not and how deficits will be addressed)
- includes program expenditure information in a table or graph format for the primary audience — parents and other members of the community

- indicates where **detailed** information on the charter school's sources of school generated funds and their uses can be obtained (e.g. web link to the Audited Financial Statements and related unaudited schedules, contact at central office) and that comparative information is available in a provincial report – provide the web link to the provincial roll up of charter school AFS information: http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/audited.aspx
- provides a web link to the charter school's Audited Financial Statements and related (**unaudited**) schedules for 2009/2010.

Required

❒ **Capital and Facilities Projects**

- summarize, for parents and the public, progress on major charter school facilities projects, i.e., building renewal and leasing for the previous school year, as applicable, focusing on benefits to students, e.g., improved accommodation of students, enhanced learning opportunities *[which students, programs]*.

❒ **Parental Involvement**

- indicate how the board met its obligations under the School Councils Regulation (updated 2007) to provide its school council the opportunity to be involved in school AERRs and to share school results and interpretation of Accountability Pillar measures with the school council.

Required

❒ **Deadlines and Communication:** Charter schools must post their board approved AERR for 2009/10 on their website by **November 30, 2010 and notify the Zone Director** by email of the posting. **The email notice must include the web link to the document.**

The AERR also must include the following information:

- the web link to the charter school AERR in both the print and posted versions
- web links to charter school AISI project annual report(s) and to the charter school average class size report (**or include the average class size report in an appendix to the AERR). The average class size report must include average class size information for the 2009/2010 school year.**

Legislation and Regulation – Key Excerpts

School Act

Accountability of board

78(1) A board shall develop a reporting and accountability system on any matter the Minister prescribes.

(2) A board shall disseminate any information in the reports and accounts produced under the reporting and accountability system it develops under subsection (1) to students, parents, electors or the Minister in the manner the Minister prescribes.

(3) A board shall use any information in the reports and accounts produced under the reporting and accountability system it develops under subsection (1) in the manner the Minister prescribes.

1995 c27 s9

Alberta Regulation 113/2007
School Act
SCHOOL COUNCILS REGULATION

Responsibilities of board

13(1) A board must provide the school council with an opportunity to provide advice on the development of the school's

(a) mission, vision and philosophy,

(b) policies,

(c) annual education plan,

(d) annual results report, and

(e) budget.

(2) A board must provide the school council with the school's provincial testing program results and other provincial measures and a reasonable interpretation of those results and measures.

Alberta Regulation 120/2008
Government Organization Act
EDUCATION GRANTS REGULATION

General authority to make grants

2 The Minister may make grants, in accordance with this Regulation, for any purpose related to any program, service or matter under the Minister's administration.

Conditions on which grants are made

7 In addition to any conditions imposed by the Minister, it is a condition of every grant made under section (2)

(a) that the recipient shall

(i) use the grant only for the purpose for which it is made,

(ii) account to the Minister, in the manner that the Minister determines and to the Minister's satisfaction, for how the grant money or any portion of it was or is being used,

(iii) permit a representative of the Minister or the Auditor General to examine any books or records that the Minister or the Auditor General considers necessary to determine how the grant money has or is being used, and

(iv) provide to the Minister, on request, any information the Minister considers necessary for the purpose of determining whether or not the grant recipient has complied or is complying with the conditions of the grant.

Glossary of Planning and Accountability Terms

Accountability: An obligation to answer or account for assigned (delegated) responsibilities, e.g., for use of funds, results achieved and for taking action to make continuous improvement and achieve desired results. Accountability arises when one party delegates responsibility to another party. Some discretion on how responsibilities are carried out is associated with the delegation of responsibility to accountable organizations. In the public sector, accountability involves transparent public reporting of results as well as reporting to the organization, such as a government ministry, that delegated responsibilities and provided funding to an accountable organization. Consequences for performance are conferred by the delegating party.

Accountability Framework: A well-designed structure to ensure accountability within organizations and between governing bodies and delegated organizations (accountable parties). An accountability framework consists of measurable goals, performance measures that provide information on progress toward and achievement of outcomes, targets that indicate a desired level of performance, strategies that are implemented and adjusted as necessary to improve results over time, evaluation of results achieved, including whether improvement has taken place, public performance reports and consequences for the performance of accountable organizations.

Continuous Improvement: Using performance results to adjust strategies and practices so that improvement in performance is achieved over time.

Goals: Broad statements that look towards the long term and steer organizations in the direction of realizing their vision. Goals are typically expressed as desired conditions or aims.

Issues: Conditions that may affect the organization's ability to fulfill its mandate or achieve its goals.

Mission Statement: A clear, concise description of an organization's overall purpose and role. It gives direction to the programs and services that the jurisdiction provides for its students.

Outcomes: Measurable statements of what an organization seeks to achieve. In broad terms, they answer the question, "What will this look like when we get to where we want to be?"

Performance Measures: Performance measures provide information on important, quantifiable aspects of the education system. They enable jurisdictions to assess progress toward achieving goals and outcomes.

Principles and Beliefs: Principles and beliefs guide decision-making and provide a foundation for developing mission, vision and goals.

Profile: A profile is a brief description of the school authority or school that gives context for the plan. Profiles include such information as characteristics of communities, students, programs, size and location.

Strategies: Strategies are actions that school authorities and schools take to achieve goals and desired outcomes that meet the needs of all their students. They address local circumstances, issues, trends and opportunities.

Targets: Targets show desired levels of performance to be attained by a certain time. Targets are expressed quantitatively.

Trend: A trend shows a direction of data over time, e.g., enrolment growth.

Vision: A vision describes a possible and desired future state for the organization, grounded in reality, which inspires and guides decisions and actions.

Terms Related to the Accountability Pillar Evaluation

(in logical, rather than alphabetical order)

Accountability Pillar: The Accountability Pillar is one of the three pillars of the Renewed Funding Framework and enhances school authority accountability for results in return for greater flexibility in the allocation of resources. The Accountability Pillar places increased emphasis on the achievement of specific outcomes by evaluating and reporting results on a common set of measures and, where results are low or declining, taking action to improve student programs and results in subsequent years. The focus of the Accountability Pillar is on improving school authority results and attaining high levels of achievement.

Accountability Pillar Performance Measures: The Accountability Pillar performance measures are a required, consistent set of measures, each of which is calculated on a comparable basis for all school authorities. School authorities are required to include this common set of performance measures and evaluations in their plans and report the results and updated evaluations for these measures in their Annual Education Results Reports. The measures draw from various kinds of data, including:

- Results of provincial testing programs
- Student outcomes, such as dropout and high school completion rates, calculated from administrative data
- Student, parent and teacher perceptions from surveys.

Category: Accountability Pillar measures are grouped into seven categories that represent key aspects of education that are important to parents and the public:

- Safe and caring schools,
- Student learning opportunities,
- Student learning achievement (Grades K to 9),
- Student learning achievement (Grades 10 to 12),
- Preparation for lifelong learning, employment and citizenship,
- Parental involvement, and
- Continuous improvement.

Evaluation Methodology: The evaluation methodology assesses each measure in the Accountability Pillar in terms of achievement and improvement, then combines the achievement and improvement evaluations to calculate overall evaluations for measures and categories.

Achievement Evaluation: The Achievement evaluation is based on comparing the current school authority result against a set of provincial standards that are expected to be fixed for 7 – 10 years. The achievement evaluation results in one of the following five achievement levels: Very High, High, Intermediate, Low, Very Low.

Standard: A standard is an established, quantifiable level of performance that is commonly understood and agreed upon, and is the basis for judging actual performance. The standards for each Accountability Pillar measure are calculated from baseline data (based on the distribution of results for all jurisdictions at a fixed point in time). The

5th, 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles of the distribution of the baseline results are used to establish the five achievement evaluation levels (listed above under "Achievement Evaluation").

Baseline: Baseline data constitute a starting point for comparisons of results against standards. Baseline data for each Accountability Pillar measure are established by averaging each school board's results across the three years to create a three-year average. The three years that form the baseline for calculating standards differ among measure types, depending on data availability:

- For student achievement measures (i.e., Provincial Achievement tests and Diploma Exams), the baseline three-year average uses data from school years 2001/02, 2002/03, and 2003/04.
- For the student outcome measures (dropout, diploma exam participation, high school completion and post-secondary transition rates), the baseline three-year average uses data from the 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 school years, except for the Rutherford Scholarship eligibility rates, which, starting with the 2007/08 results provided in May 2009, uses data from 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 for the baseline three-year average.
- For survey measures, the baseline three-year average uses results from 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Improvement Evaluation: The improvement evaluation focuses on improvement over time. Improvement is evaluated by comparing the school authority's current result against the authority's previous three-year average using chi-square. (Chi square is a statistical test to determine the probability that there is no significant difference between an observed outcome and the expected outcome. In the case of the Accountability Pillar improvement evaluation, the chi square test is used to determine the probability that there is no significant difference between an authority's current result on a measure and its prior three-year average for that measure.) The improvement evaluation results in one of the following five improvement levels: Improved Significantly, Improved, Maintained, Declined, Declined Significantly.

Overall Measure Evaluation: Once the improvement and achievement levels have been calculated for a measure, an overall measure evaluation is calculated, which reflects both the achievement evaluation and the improvement evaluation. The overall measure evaluation is reported on a five point scale: Excellent, Good, Acceptable, Issue, Concern.

Category Evaluation: For each category of Accountability Pillar measures, the overall evaluations for each measure within that group are averaged to provide an evaluation for that category. The averaging is done by assigning the following numbers to the overall evaluation for each measure: Excellent**:** 2; Good: 1; Acceptable: 0; Issue: -1, and Concern: -2. These values are averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number. This result is then compared with the above list of assigned numerical values for each of the five evaluation ratings to determine the evaluation for the category.

Improvement/Decline: Improvement or decline for an Accountability Pillar measure is determined by comparing the current result against the previous three-year average using the chi-square test of statistical significance. Using the chi-square test:

- an **improvement or decline** occurs when the current result is at least one standard deviation above or below the previous three-year average, but less than two standard deviations.
- a **significant improvement or decline** (at the 5% level of confidence, or nineteen times out of twenty) occurs when the current result is approximately two or more standard deviations above or below the previous three-year average.

Target: Targets related to achievement standards are set for each year of the plan when the evaluation of results for a measure is "Issue" or "Concern". These targets for Accountability Pillar measures:

- have a higher numerical value each year than the current result (except for dropout rates, where a lower result shows improvement)
- show reasonable progress toward or move into the next higher achievement standard over the three years.

Making gains over time toward the next achievement level or attaining it will be reflected in the improvement evaluation as well. At minimum the improvement evaluation would be "Maintained," and could be "Improved" or "Improved Significantly."

Appendix

Accountability Statements

Accountability Statements are required for stand-alone three-year education plans and annual education results reports. Charter schools that continue to prepare three-year education plans and annual education results reports as separate documents use the Accountability Statements below.

Accountability Statement for the Three-Year Education Plan

The Education Plan for (name of charter school) for the three years commencing September 1, (year) was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with the responsibilities under the *School Act* and the *Government Organization Act*. This Education Plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Charter Board has used its performance results to develop the Plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the Plan to improve student learning and results.

The Charter Board approved the Education Plan for 2010-2013 on _____(month and day), 2010.

Accountability Statement for the Annual Education Results Report (AERR)

The annual education results report for (name of charter school) for the (year) school year was prepared under the direction of the board in accordance with the responsibilities under the *School Act* and the *Government Organization Act*. The charter board is committed to using the results in this report, to the best of its abilities, to improve outcomes for students and to ensure that all its students can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.

This AERR for 2009/2010 was approved by the Charter Board on _____(month and day), 2010.

Combined Accountability Statement for the Annual Education Results Report and Three-Year Education Plan

Charter schools that combine their AERR and three-year education plan into a single document use the following Accountability Statement:

> The Annual Education Results Report for the (year) school year and the Education Plan for the three years commencing September 1, (year) for (name of charter school) was prepared under the direction of the Charter Board in accordance with its responsibilities under the *School Act* and the *Government Organization Act*. This document was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Charter Board has used the results reported in the document, to the best of its abilities, to develop the Education Plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the Education Plan to improve student learning and results.
>
> The Charter Board approved this combined Annual Education Results Report for the 2009/2010 school year and the three-year Education Plan for 2010 – 2013 on _____ (month and day), 2010.